

DRAFT MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 3, 2011
MEETING OF THE PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members Present: Erwin Mack, Chair; David Anspacher; Ramin Assa; Angel Garcia-Ablanque, MCPS; Captain Thomas Didone; Jeff Dunckel, Pedestrian Safety Coordinator; Steve Friedman; Arthur Holmes, MCDOT; Alan Migdall; Peter Moe, MSHA; Alyce Ortuzar; Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring RSC; Jack Strausman

Members Absent: John Britton, Municipal League; Valerie Ervin, Councilmember; Colleen Mitchell, Vice Chair; Richard Romer; David Sharp

County Staff: Will Haynes, MCDOT-DTEO; Tom Pogue, MCDOT; Bill Selby, MCDOT; Susanne Churchill, DGS

Guests: Darian Unger, Chair-SSCAB; Bernice North, SSCAB; Constance Wynn, SSCAB; Cedric Ward, MSHA; Kathy Stevens, SSCAB; Evan Glass, SSCAB; Jessica Fusillo, SSCAB; Jurg Siegenthaler, SSCAB; Linda Siegenthaler, SSCAB; Mark Noll, SSCAB; Bob Colvin, SSCAB; Edna Miller; Barbara Ditzler, Woodside Park; Barbara Sanders, Woodside Park & Purple Line NOW; Earl Shoop, Indian Spring; William Smith; Susan Zusy, SSCAB; Praj Kasbekar; Daniel Morales, SSCAB; Dan Nabors, VHB Consultant

1. Committee Business: This was a joint meeting between the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PTSAC) and the Silver Spring Citizen's Advisory Board's Pedestrian and Transportation Committee (PTC). PTSAC Chairman Erwin Mack called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The minutes of the September meeting were introduced.

ACTION: The committee moved to approve the September 2011 minutes; approved unanimously.

Reappointment and Selection of Committee Members: Interviews for the four committee candidates will be held in the coming week and recommended candidates are expected to be approved by the January meeting. The Executive submits his nominations to the County Council for their official approval.

PTSAC Reauthorization and Name: Jeff Dunckel reported that Council President Valerie Ervin and Councilmember Roger Berliner introduced legislation, Bill 27-11, that will remove the sunset provision, specify that one member be from the disabilities community, and add "bicycle" to PTSAC's name: Pedestrian, ***Bicycle*** and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Council approved Bill 27-11 on October 25, 2011, eliminating the committee's sunset provision, changing the name of PTSAC to PBTSAC, and designating one of the members be from the disabilities community.

2. SS CAB Pedestrian and Transportation Committee: Darian Unger, , and Dan Morales, Co-Chairs of the SSCAB-PTC, introduced their committee's members.

Police update on traffic and pedestrian incidents in District 3: Sgt. Tom Harmon was unable to attend, so Capt. Tom Didone informed committee of traffic update. Bicycle collisions are down 40 over last year's—a three year trend. Police are expanding the speed camera program and signed a new contract with the vendor. Studies are being conducted along 16th Street and Franklin Avenue in Silver Spring to be considered for inclusion to the Speed Camera Program.

3. Safety, Walkability, and Public Facilities: Silver Spring Library: Jeff Dunckel introduced Susanne Churchill, DGS Project Manager, and Dan Nabors, VHB Consultant, who conducted a pedestrian impact study for the Silver Spring Library. Susanne updated the committee on the status of the project. Utility relocation-Phase 1 has commenced. Sewer and storm drain relocations are complete; Pepco and Verizon relocations should be complete in the next couple months. Construction of the library should begin in the summer 2012. DGS, in consultation with MCDOT, commissioned VHB Consultants to prepare a pedestrian impact study to evaluate the impact of the new library on surrounding sites and safe pedestrian access. The presentation of the study will be available on DGS' website within the next few days.

Presentation of Study: Dan Nabors, VHB, presented the impact study to the committees. The main objective of the study was to evaluate the effects of the library on pedestrians, bicycles, traffic and mobility. The study included five intersections surrounding the library, reviewing the existing conditions and proposing recommendations to improve safe accessibility for pedestrians.

Recommendations: 12 key recommendations were made and their impacts explained. DGS had a comment period for the committees and guests. The report and 12 recommendations can be viewed on the DGS web site at:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/DGS/DBDC/RegionalProjectPages/SilverSpringProjects/sslibrary.asp>

Darian Unger expressed concern that almost none of the SS CAB's requests from prior meetings were considered in the study. SS CAB members commented on the fact that the study did not take the impending Purple Line into consideration when conducting the study. Other comments were made about the lack of barn dance crossings, mid-block crossings, stop bars and raised crosswalks. Will Haynes, MCDOT, said MCDOT has to look into the feasibility of the recommendations made in the study.

4. Update on State Projects Under Construction and Planned: Cedric Ward, MSHA District 3, provided an overview of ongoing as well as upcoming projects. Seven corridors in the county, two in Silver Spring, have been identified as having a high rate of pedestrian crashes. SHA will work with the County to develop projects to address such High Incidence Areas. A pedestrian-road safety audit, focusing on pedestrian issues, will be conducted on Colesville Rd (Rte.29) between Fenton and Noyes. SHA is reviewing ways to partner with the County to provide funding of future projects.

Resurfacing Projects: Piney Branch, Four Corners, Others: Cedric updated the committee on the status of resurfacing of Piney Branch Road (Rte. 320) and University Boulevard (Rte. 193); should be complete by spring 2012. Colesville Road (Rte. 29) will undergo a Reversible Lane System update at the end of summer 2012.

Georgia Avenue Signal Reconstruction: William Smith raised concern over lack of oversight on the project; stating there is limited- to-no accessibility to sidewalks during construction. Cedric informed residents that they should see an improvement of these conditions. Notices prior to construction will be posted, as well. Also, telephone numbers will be posted to report blocked sidewalks during construction.

16th Street Circle: Evan Glass inquired about responsibility for the 16th Street Circle; County, State or District of Columbia. Cedric informed committee that the 16th Street Circle will eventually become signalized. However, in the interim an agreement was signed where the County performed a portion of sidewalk improvements and SHA improved the lane markings and signage. Delineators will also be installed by SHA to shorten the distance for pedestrians to cross at the circle. An agreement is still in the works to determine whether the SHA or the District will maintain the signals once they are installed.

5. Sidewalks Program in Montgomery County: Dan Morales, SS CAB- PTC, presented an analysis of the sidewalks in East Silver Spring to the committee.

Proposed Pilot Study: Pedestrian Network Assessment: Jeff Dunckel informed the committees about the recommendation for a pilot study at two locations for review of sidewalk conditions that was approved by the PTSAC during the September 8, 2011 meeting (see meeting packet).

Ramin Assa, Chairman of the PTSAC Pedestrian Network Sub- Committee, explained the need for an inventory of sidewalks and their conditions County-wide so that we know where problems are and are able to address them. Two neighborhoods have been recommended for the pilot study to prepare an inventory/assessment of their sidewalks - Montgomery Hills and East Bethesda. Pedestrian networks are also an area of concern - length of wait-time at crosswalks, distance to crosswalks, etc. An analysis of the pedestrian network, including road crossings, is also recommended to take place in the pilot neighborhoods.

ACTION: MCDOT to evaluate the recommendation for a pilot study within its 2013 budget request process.

Building sidewalks in established neighborhoods – how it’s done: Rick Earp, MCDOT Annual Sidewalks Program Manager, explained the process to have a sidewalk installed in established neighborhoods. The budget for sidewalks is 2.35 million dollars – 1.7 million for construction. Sidewalk installations are evaluated on a request basis only and require a public hearing unless MCDOT determines the project meets certain criteria to allow waiver of a

hearing. The biggest problem is neighbors’ opposition. The Process for having a sidewalk installed is available on MCDOT’s website.

A number of residents/ PTC members expressed concern about the process for which a sidewalk is approved. The fact that several residents, or even one homeowner, can impede the installation on public property had many people distraught with the process by which a sidewalk is installed.

Other residents expressed concern about areas where there is a limited right-of-way. They inquired about whether there is a process to retro-fit sidewalks in older neighborhoods - such as Grove Street - - where there is not much right-of-way.

ACTION: Arthur Holmes, Jr. – MCDOT Director -- asked Rick Earp to inspect Grove Street.

Art Holmes further reinforced the need for due process when deciding whether a sidewalk is approved. He suggested that if residents are not happy with the current process, they need to contact their Council member. Alyce Ortuzar commented that the new sidewalk construction process and how homeowners affect the outcome ought to be reviewed.

6. Open Forum – Comments and Concerns from Silver Spring: Bill Smith was frustrated with how long the process was taking to have poles (PEPCO) that were in the sidewalks removed from along Sligo Ave. The fact that the Justice Department had to get involved compounded his frustrations. He challenged the assertion in a letter he received that the sidewalk in front of his house on Sligo was now ADA compliant.

A resident inquired about plans submitted to the Justice Department – the County’s Transition Plan - to correct the deficiencies and non-compliant sidewalks. MCDOT has submitted Transition Plans to the Federal Government.

7. Subcommittee Reports, Updates, and Recommendations:

Sidewalks-Pedestrian Networks: Ramin Assa inquired about the “engineering changes” that can affect whether a sidewalk is approved for construction. He also asked about the likelihood that a sidewalk will not be installed based on opposition. Rick Earp replied that nearly all sidewalks that are put through a mandatory hearing process are eventually approved for construction; only a few sidewalks have been denied.

Bicycle Access and Safety: Cedric Ward (SHA) informed the committees that when roads are paved they are now to have a bike lane installed, unless they qualify for a waiver due to infeasibility.

Ride-Along: Steve Friedman discussed the purpose and outcome of the County’s first Ride-Along event held on October 21, 2011. A summary of the event was included in the Meeting Packet.

8. New Business/Committee Comments:

January Meeting to Focus on Bicycle Issues: Erwin mentioned agenda topics for the next meeting including a focus on bicycling in the county.

ACTION: Peter Moe requests that SHA have a representative present at the January 2012 meeting to address bicycle issues from the State’s perspective.

Next Scheduled Meeting Date: January 5, 2012, **Location:** Rockville EOB-9th Floor Conference Room

The committees sang Happy Birthday to Chairman Erwin Mack, who turned 80 on November 4.

9. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm